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NSC BRIEFING

29 February 1956

Top Party Elections in the USSR

- I. Recent Soviet party elections confirm that collective leadership still exists.
  - A. No changes made in the top eleven slots--the full members of the party presidium.
  - B. However, five new candidate members of the presidium were chosen:
    1. Marshal Zhukov--the first professional army officer to reach this political level. Indicates increased interest in the military viewpoint by the party leaders.
    2. Mukhitdinov--39 year old party boss and agricultural expert in Uzbekistan (Central Asia). He is probably a Khrushchev protege.
    3. Brezhnev--top party man in Kazakhstan--heart of the "new lands" area.
    4. Shepilov--a member of the party secretariat and chief editor of Pravda. Travelled with Khrushchev to China and Yugoslavia during 1954-1955. Instrumental in setting up the arms deal with Egypt. Considered a "comer."
    5. Madame Furtseva--Moscow party boss--46 years old and a graduate chemical engineer. She has been in the Moscow party organization since 1942. Her husband, N. D. Firyubin, is Soviet Ambassador to Yugoslavia.

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She has been Khrushchev's dance partner at Kremlin receptions.

6. Shvernik--the only hold-over. Head of the trade unions since Stalin's death.

C. The only casualty was P. K. Ponomarenko, who was dropped as a Presidium candidate. He is currently Ambassador to Poland.

II. The party secretariat, under First Secretary Khrushchev, expanded from six to eight.

A. Two new secretaries Brezhnev and Furtseva, (Khrushchev proteges) are also new presidium candidates.

B. Khrushchev's control over the secretariat seems to be well solidified.

III. A new 255-man central committee was also elected.

A. Khrushchev's predominant position established beyond doubt by the election of a large number of his proteges.

1. Other top leaders (Mikoyan, Bulganin, and Kaganovich) also have a liberal sprinkling of their supporters represented on the central committee.

2. Some decrease noted in the representation of army and police on central committee. The few slots represented by this decrease were distributed among other governmental positions.

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